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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT THURSDAY, December 15, 1932.

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Subject: "Worthwhile Playthings." Information from the White House Conference, approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Speaking of thrifty buying and getting your money's worth, did you ever consider the matter of children's toys? Along about Christmas time I begin to wonder if more money isn't wasted and more poor buys made on toys than on anything else. Somehow when the fond relatives start shopping for the youngsters' Christmas gifts they forget all about intelligent purchasing. Aunt Sabina may be shrewd about her daily marketing and may buy her clothes and household furnishings with the greatest care, but when she goes shopping for her young nieces and nephews, her good judgment seems to vanish. Never mind whether the toy suits the child, never mind whether it is well made and of good material. If it takes her fancy and doesn't cost too much she'll buy it. Uncle John is three times worse. Nobody can put anything over on him in business, but just watch what the young lady at the toy counter can do with him. He's likely to buy anything or all she suggests. So the factories turn out many toys that please grown-ups rather than children. Youngsters have needless disappointments at Christmas, when toys aren't right for their age or their interest, or when playthings are so cheaply made that they go to pieces. And that's why lots of money goes to waste.

But what I started to talk about today was the right toy to buy. If you're going shopping, maybe these tips from the child psychologists will help you get your money's worth. Never mind if you're only going to spend a nickel on each toy. The less you have to spend, the more wisely you need to spend it.

The first question to ask yourself when you consider any gift for a child is: "is it a do-with toy? Can the child really use it in some way that will add to his happiness and good development?"

You know that play is the serious business of the youngest generation. Play is the means of preparing for life. And the right kind of toys help success.

What kind of toys are 'do-with' toys? Perhaps they're creative toys like blocks to build with, crayons, paints, modeling clay, a sand pile, garden tools, carpenter's tools, or anything else that leads the child on to experiment, plan and work out ideas. Perhaps they're toys for physical activity like a wagon, tricycle, sled, snow shovel, child-size broom or carpet sweeper, ball, bean bag game and so forth. Perhaps they're toys that encourage dramatic and social play like dolls and doll furniture, a tea-party table and chairs, a toy telephone and so on. Different kind of toys help the child in different ways. If he is to be a well-balanced person he needs to have a well-balanced collection of playthings. He needs toys for quiet play indoors and vigorous play outdoors, toys to help him

dramatize life as he sees it going on around him, those that help him build and create, and those that promote happy social play with other children.

Many of the elaborate novel toys that appeal to adults don't interest the child because he can do nothing with them. Take mechanical toys, for instance. Young John may be interested in a mechanical toy at first. But he soon tires of it. It does the same thing over and over and he can only sit and watch. Many a youngster turns from an expensive gift brought by doting relatives to some old spools and boxes which he finds he can make into something.

So the do-with quality is the first point for the toy-shopper to consider. For children under six, especially, the second point is durability. Will the toy stand wear and tear? Or is it so poorly made that it soon goes to pieces and disappoints its young owner or, even worse, makes him feel that all possessions can soon be discarded for new ones. Good toys may need occasional repairing, but they ought to last long enough to pass on to other children. Many homemade toys have this quality of durability.

Then, is the toy sanitary and safe for the small child? Has it dangerous rough edges or color that will come off?

"Safe, simple, sanitary, and suitable to age and size" might be the slogan for good toys, Simple, easily-handled, large yet light-weight toys are best for very young children. A child of three or four is more successful with a large ball or with large light-weight, wooden blocks than with small materials. His large muscles develop before his small ones.

Of course, you need to consider the special child you are buying the gift for-- his special personality and interests. If you don't know the child well, consult some of the many lists of playthings suitable for different age groups. Those worked out by child psychologists who know the needs of children of different ages are most helpful. If you're buying books, here again lists of books suitable for different ages will help you make a wise choice.

Finally, the number of toys worth considering both for economy's sake and for the child's happiness. A few good toys are worth far more to any child than a roomful of poor ones. A few good toys offer him endless play possibilities. He can do one thing with the toy one day and another the next day. But too many toys confuse him.

Tomorrow: "A Friday Fish Dinner."